CD/PV.638
26 January 1993

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 26 January 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim (Brazil)

GE.93-60140 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 638th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before we proceed with our business at this plenary meeting, I should like to refer to a suggestion that I requested the Secretary-General to transmit to you on Friday, concerning the holding today of an informal meeting to discuss the request addressed to the Conference by the General Assembly in its decision adopted on 9 December 1992. In accordance with subparagraph (c) of that decision, the Conference on Disarmament is requested to transmit to the resumed session of the First Committee, by 15 February 1993, the results of its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era", as well as the status of its ongoing review of its agenda, composition and methods of work, by 20 February 1993.

As time is now of the essence, it seems to me that it would be appropriate to discuss this question today, so that we might exchange preliminary views on the two issues. Several representatives contacted me yesterday, expressing agreement with this suggestion, on the understanding that, on this occasion, the informal meeting should be held with the participation of members only. If there is no objection, we shall then proceed with the informal meeting, as envisaged, immediately after this plenary meeting.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The representative of Romania, Ambassador Neagu, is inscribed to address this plenary meeting, and I now give him the floor.

Mr. NEAGU (Romania): Mr. President, allow me, first of all, to express my delegation's deep satisfaction at having the privilege to start the current session of the Conference on Disarmament under your able guidance. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation towards the success of your endeavours. I am convinced that your talent and experience will guide our deliberations productively and also innovatively. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and respect to the past President, Ambassador Michel Servais of Belgium, and to thank him for the excellent work he has done during his presidency. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues who have lately taken up their posts at the Conference on Disarmament: His Excellency Mr. Huan Archibaldo Lanús of Argentina, His Excellency Dr. Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany, His Excellency Satish Chandra of India, His Excellency Don Nanjira of Kenya and His Excellency Lars Norberg of Sweden.

The outset of the 1993 session of the Conference on Disarmament is taking place in an encouraging, though still fragile world environment, offering new, sometimes contradictory opportunities. The East-West confrontation and its global corollaries - ideological rivalry and bloc politics - no longer dominate the international landscape. These fundamental changes have created a different

system with potential areas of insecurity in which many States lack military protection. At the same time, there has been a marked

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broadening and deepening of the dimensions of disarmament. Beyond the mere regulation of armaments and the arms race, disarmament agreements include now the destruction of existing arsenals and the limitation of future production.

The last year and a half has been successful and rich for arms control and disarmament, with remarkable progress in arms limitation, including: the initiatives of the United States and the former Soviet Union to withdraw and destroy most of their tactical nuclear weapons; the agreement by the United States and the Commonwealth of Independent States to reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals; the addition of the ranks of adherents to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty of a number of the most significant previous hold-outs; the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which seeks to establish a stable and secure balance of conventional forces at lower levels, and which has been previously applied in all its aspects; the signature of the Treaty on open skies that eventually could extend to regions well beyond its original area of application, i.e. Europe, Canada and the United States; and the completion of a comprehensive chemical weapons Convention.

Taking advantage of the opportunities created by the transformation of the global security environment, the United States and Russia agreed to the most far-reaching cuts in nuclear arsenals since the dawn of the atomic age, the highest point of which was attained only three weeks ago by the signature of the Treaty on F,3
urther Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II). The Romanian Government warmly welcomed and expressed great satisfaction with the conclusion of the new agreement, which represents a milestone in the quest for nuclear disarmament. The START II agreement, which will reduce by two thirds the current levels of strategic offensive nuclear weapons in the United States and Russia, is a product of bilateral dialogue and mutual concessions and benefits both sides, as well as the entire international community. It also symbolizes the new partnership between the United States and Russia in the post-cold-war era and the new relationship in the broader context and dimensions of that Euro-Atlantic space and in the whole world. The well-crafted and significant START II agreement will enhance security and stability - both militarily and politically - on the international scene and will give impetus to bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts aimed at eliminating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction around the world.

On a broader level, the Conference on Disarmament has proven its ability to serve as the single negotiating body for multilateral disarmament. The chemical weapons Convention (CWC), which in the recent past had been the main focus of our attention, was signed in Paris, two weeks ago, by 130 States. The completion of this landmark convention is historic in its complexity and scale. Never before have so many countries undertaken so far-reaching and intrusive a treaty to completely ban an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. The Convention is

the much needed impetus for efforts to seek solutions at the negotiating table and represents a welcome step in addressing regional and world security concerns. It is the first agreement with an effective verification regime allowing on-site inspections of any facility suspected of non-compliance. Most important, this truly non-discriminatory

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instrument establishes an international norm that delegitimizes and stigmatizes possession of chemical weapons. In all these regards and despite some inherent imperfections, the CWC may serve as a model for future disarmament accords. Adherence to it should, therefore, be universal.

The CWC will help in improving the regime under another important international instrument - the 1972 biological weapons Convention. This latter agreement, aimed at excluding completely the possibility of biological agents and toxins being used as weapons, represented a real turning-point in the modern age, for it was the first international document since the Second World War to provide for the actual elimination of an abhorrent weapon from the arsenals of nations. The success of the third 1991 review conference, which inter alia mandated an Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to identify and examine potential verification measures from a scientific and technical standpoint, serves as testimony to the interest in and commitment to the Convention.

The CWC may also serve as an example for improving the definition of biological weapons, so as to take into account recent developments in biosciences. In fact, the two regimes might over time be harmonized, the more that, with the accomplishment of the CWC and with the BWC in place, both categories of weapons of mass destruction have now been outlawed for ever and represent indispensable elements in global efforts to deal effectively with weapons of mass destruction.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania stated in Paris on 14 January, "completing the negotiation and the successful signing ceremony are only the first steps toward achieving the Convention's fundamental objectives. Much work should be done in the coming months by the Preparatory Commission for the future Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and by individual States, in order to secure smooth implementation of the provisions of the Convention. The Romanian delegation, which participated during all past years in the complex negotiation on the CWC, envisages quick ratification of the Convention by the Romanian Parliament. My country is ready to play an active role, at all levels, in the implementation of the Convention, including the Prepcom or the Executive Council and the Technical Secretariat of the future OPCW".

The newly signed strategic arms reduction Treaty and the chemical weapons Convention are important steps towards bringing into fruition a foundation for a rather comprehensive arms control regime and could play a key role in fulfilling our pledge to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

The proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction and the spread of technology related to research on or production of such weapons constitute a threat to international peace and are likely to dominate security concerns of people in the coming decade. In this connection the proliferation of nuclear weapons is one of the most burning security issues of our time. In our view, it

is necessary to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, of which the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty is the fundamental pillar. So far, the NPT

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remains an indispensable framework for our global non-proliferation efforts. The recent accession of a number of States to the Treaty and the intentions of the new republics of the former Soviet Union to follow suit, the conclusion by other States of various agreements on nuclear safeguards with IAEA, the commitment of the United States of America to the NPT's indefinite extension, as well as the adoption by the United States, the Russian Federation and France of unilateral moratoria on nuclear testing are most positive, welcome developments. All the permanent members of the Security Council have now become parties to this Treaty, which is vital for the survival of mankind.

However, non-proliferation of nuclear arms cannot be taken for granted. There are continuing challenges to the NPT which, if ignored, could undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the Treaty. There are worrying proliferation pressures in different regions of the world while some countries with significant nuclear activities remain outside the Treaty. Though progress has been made in super-Power nuclear arms control, more needs to be done. True, the invention of the atomic bomb cannot be reversed. Nevertheless, if these weapons continue to be in the arsenals of some nations, even at low numbers, yet without a commitment to go down to a close-to-zero minimum - if reduction to zero seems impossible for the time being - the invitation for horizontal proliferation would persist. There are also doubts that IAEA has the necessary resources, both human and financial, to carry out its international legal responsibilities in the application of safeguards at a time when there are significant developments in the nuclear fuel cycle.

Romania reconfirms its full support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and for universal adherence to it. While emphasizing the vital role in the implementation of the Treaty of fully effective IAEA safeguards, as well as the importance of effective export controls, my Government is firmly in favour of the indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT at the 1995 review conference.

The conclusion of a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing has become a major issue in the context of the non-proliferation Treaty, of nuclear disarmament in general. The pressure for a comprehensive test ban has arisen especially in United Nations forums, including the First Committee of the General Assembly and the Disarmament Commission, and in our Conference on Disarmament. Work has also been done on the issue of seismic verification of a test ban in the Group of Scientific Experts under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament. The PTBT amendment conference served to bring the problems into prominence once again amongst participating States. At the same time, the recent United States decision on nuclear tests proves that approaches to this problem are changing in a constructive direction. A comprehensive ban on nuclear testing would decisively contribute to halting the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and thus would be a significant step leading to the goal of the elimination, in the long run, of all nuclear weapons.

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We deem it necessary that, in light of the emerging favourable situation, the CD should impart a new impulse to our progress towards a complete ban on nuclear tests and step up efforts to find generally accepted and effective practical solutions to the remaining problems in this domain. The recent re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban provides the necessary framework for fruitful discussion aimed at concluding a treaty banning all nuclear explosions for test purposes at the earliest possible time. However, my delegation does not subscribe to any linkage between the achievement of a comprehensive test ban and the decision to be taken on the extension of the NPT. Any weakening of the non-proliferation regime and any spread of nuclear weapons beyond the States which have them already will undermine international security, and we simply cannot afford to take that risk.

Potential spread of the capability to produce or acquire weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them constitute a growing threat to international security. There can be no justification to acquire the tools and technologies of mass destruction at a moment when real progress and substantial disarmament are finally beginning to occur. Years ago the world community began to develop a regime aimed at creating responsible proliferation control, not only of nuclear, biological and chemical arms, but also of long-range delivery systems and dual-use technologies, due to the growing threat posed by some States that have the potential capability and the will to produce them secretly, unwise export policies, regional destabilization following the end of the cold war and the proliferation of technology in general. Such controls should be balanced and fair and, in order to be effective, must not hamper the peaceful uses of science and technology.

As is well known, the export regimes aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons are based on the NPT, while the export of nuclear items usually falls under the heading of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Considerable efforts have been made to improve the rules on preventing the spread of biological and chemical weapons and their precursors, which now have their roots in the BWC and, hopefully, the CWC. Guidelines for nuclear, biological and chemical transfers have been established in the frameworks of international bodies and groupings, such as the "London Club", "Nuclear Suppliers' Guidelines", the NPT Exporters Committee (also called the Zanger Committee), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the "Australia Group". At national levels, export regimes aim at preventing the export of commercial goods to certain destinations and constitute an instrument to control and prevent the proliferation of merchandise, which could contribute to undesired arms developments in receiving States.

The Romanian Government reiterates its commitment to the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missiles capable of carrying such weapons and missile technology. It is in this spirit that my Government

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has adhered to the Nuclear Suppliers' Group and has publicly committed itself to respect MTCR and other groupings' guidelines. My Government has decided to join all these international bodies and is determined to further cooperate with partner States in reaching the major goals of non-proliferation. To this end and in order to assure full respect of these guidelines at the national level, as well as to give itself the means to control that through its national legislation and law enforcement authority, the Romanian Government adopted, on 28 September 1992, decision No. 594 on "the import and export regime of items and technologies under final destination control, as well as on the export control regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and of missiles carrying such weapons". This document, which has been distributed as document CD/1178, is self-explanatory. It represents indeed a true and efficient legal instrument which establishes an effective system ensuring that the Romanian technology is used solely for economic development, not diverted to military purposes or to unintended
countries. It ensures at the national level the appropriate regulations and machinery which would guarantee the strict control of the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and also cooperation with other States on these issues.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Neagu of Romania for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. Does any other member wish to take the floor at this stage?

I don't see any request for the floor, so I shall now turn to other business. The secretariat has circulated a note by the President, contained in document CD/WP.439, relating to requests from non-members to participate in the work of the Conference. So far, no objection has been raised in connection with the communications attached to that note. This being the case, may I suggest that we adopt the recommendation contained in the document directly in plenary, on the understanding that this does not set a precedent for future occasions when an informal meeting may be necessary? May I take it that the Conference takes action as recommended?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: You will recall that, at our last plenary meeting, I made a statement as President of the Conference on organizational arrangements for our future work. I stated that, as announced previously, I would appoint two special co-ordinators to conduct consultations on the issues of membership and the agenda. I shall do so very soon, as their contribution to our work in the coming weeks will be particularly important in the process of preparation of the report to be transmitted to the First Committee of the General Assembly on those subjects with which they will be dealing.

I have invited the group co-ordinators to intensify their consultations on the chairmanships of the various ad hoc committees and I would like to do so with

the members of the Conference. I hope that we will be in a position a proceed to appoint all chairmen at our next plenary meeting, so that the subsidiary bodies might start their work immediately.

(The President)

In accordance with the decision taken today at the beginning of this session, I intend now to adjourn the plenary meeting and convene an informal meeting of the Conference to consider the question of the reports that the Conference will transmit to the First Committee of the General Assembly.

Before we adjourn the plenary meeting, I wish to inform you that, at our next plenary meeting on Thursday, His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt will be our first speaker. The Minister intends to arrive punctually and I trust that we shall then be in a position to start our proceedings without any delay.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 28 January, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.